



Lazy Dungeon Master



Volume 13 – The Saintess’
Serious Mode

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Volume Thirteen - The Saintess' Serious Mode

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Chapter 131 - The Village's Name and the Saintess' Time Limit

As work for winter, I decided to help out with Gozoh's iron golem hunting. It was a scary place since there's a demon that's become a threat, but the guild's purchasing price is at a premium because of it. Well, it's fine since there's something I want to hear.

In the middle of helping defeat iron golems, I asked Gozoh something.

"By the way, what happened with the village's name, Gozoh?"

"Huh? ... Ah, sorry. I-I said I'd think about it, but I didn't."

This guy forgot.

"I see. Is it because I'm a figurehead village chief? That's cruel."

"... Aah, on that subject, you were a figurehead?"

"Right right, Gozoh+Roppu's Love Love Village huh. Man, sounds like a great name~"

"H-hey, no! I definitely.... thought about the name. Golen!"

You just happened to see a golem just now, oi.

But Golen Village huh. Well, it's not bad. The feeling it has from making a pun on [Golem] that represents our dungeon and inn is good... Is golem spoken as golem in this other world's language too? The skill name is [Create Golem], so the possibility should be high.

"Is there any meaning?"

"... It's close to being a village of golems."

"It does fit, well, that's good I guess."

"Eh!? Y-you seriously aren't going to give it more thought!?"

"Nah, it's a wonderful name that Gozoh thought about for a long time, I shouldn't need to think about it on top of that... Let's gather the villagers into the bar and make it a grand announcement. We'll have you announce the name's meaning to everyone."

"Sorry! I thought it up just now, forgive me!"

“Hahaha, thought so.”

“Hahaha.”

Gozoh and I laughed with each other.

“But I did decide on Golen. It leaves a good impression.”

“Seriously...”

Like that, the no-named village became Golen Village.

It’s a much better name than Gozoh+Roppu’s Love Love Village.

“So it’s been snowing now, is our winter storage doing alright?”

“Yeah, we’re alright on that front. Rather, thanks to you letting the village’s people use your inn’s onsen free of charge, we don’t need many magic stones to use as fuel or for heating magic tools. We have lots left. There’s even a lot of extra old flour in the warehouse. The taste’s a bit worse for wear, but there’s nothing wrong with at all. I mean, with having Sia’s and Pavuera’s markets go through us, it looks like the merchants are planning on using this village as a way station even through this winter.”

In other words, our supplies are perfect. Even if in the rare chance that we run out, we can import. I wonder if he used the hundred gold I gave him to set that up?

They’ll be using the cave’s toll system, so then we’ll be getting a welcome income even without doing anything. Is this the thrill of investment...? Ah, did he say that he’d give more gold back if it went well?

“Gozoh... merchants are amazing.”

“Really. But you’re also a big shot, being able to take out such a huge amount like it’s nothing.”

I haven’t been able to think of a hundred gold coins as being much money recently after seeing the saintess practically shed it though...

If he’s able to get extra gold back, maybe I’ll try investing two hundred into him next time?

*

Several days later. A response letter appeared to have arrived from the Holy Kingdom.

It's contents... an order for her to return.

[... Return? I haven't done anything yet though!?]

[It says something about taking responsibility... not gently, either.]

[Responsibility? For what?]

It also looks like the letter Rokuko wrote arrived safely as well.

One addressed to Rokuko had also arrived.

Its contents: [We do not intend to wage war, that would be undesirable and is not something we wish to happen. The saintess had done that without permission. Please give our regards to the emperor.]

With that as an excuse: [The saintess will return home.]

It's great they didn't suddenly say something like they'd go to war with us. I can't take responsibility for that.

[I don't understand. To summon us back as fast as possible... it seems they won't be providing additional funding.]

[Guh, I should have been more sparing with the cake then...! But I couldn't resist the temptation! I was told there were only eight slices left of that luxurious thing, I don't regret it at all!]

Yep, it was that cake. Once she had one, she had to purchase all eight of the slices at ten gold each for a total of eighty gold for the whole cake. She didn't hesitate even though she's running out of money; sweets are incredible.

Using fresh eggs and ample amounts of sugar with a generous amount of rich milk and superior wheat flower, it was a luxuriously made cake. Moreover, it also made use of the [Cooking] skill's correction. Being able to eat it in such a small mountain village, it was probably still cheap at ten gold a slice.

The saintess put it in her [Storage] after buying it, so it won't go bad either.

In addition, even though we can make as many cakes for as much ingredients we have, there weren't any others made so it wasn't a lie saying that was the last one.

[According to the letter, three more days should be our limit even after pushing it...]

[In that case, there is no choice but for me to capture the dungeon, is there? I feel sorry to Village Chief-sama, but it should be alright to get approval for it after the act. So that I may repay Village Chief-sama's kindness for providing me

with these valuable goods, it's time for me to take this seriously!]

Oi, the heck are you saying, 'It's fine to get it afterwards'?

... Unfortunately, looks like we'll also have to get serious.

I decided to leave watching the saintess to Rokuko and went to talk to Rin.

Rin was laying down in a snugly warm room.

"Ooi, Rin. You awake? Mind talking for a bit?"

[Nn? I'm awake. What, Kehma?]

"It's like this—"

I told Rin that the troublesome saintess would be coming for around three more days.

And that it would be great if Rin could keep doing its best defending.

"I'm counting on you then, Rin."

[Nn...]

Saying that, Rin plopped back down. I couldn't feel its motivation, but maybe that's just it being in hibernation mode or something?

Hibernation... man, I want to hibernate too. If possible, I'd love to sleep through spring and summer too... and fall.

Chapter 132 - The Saintess' Serious Mode 1

After asking Rin for the favor, I returned to the master room. On foot. Rokuko isn't in the core room right now. She's still monitoring the saintess in her room in the inn.

Without Rokuko to bring me into it, there's no choice for me but to walk there. It's a bit inconvenient... I kind of want a master room retrieval worker.

"Still, I wonder what she means by getting serious?"

It'd take no time at all getting back if I exited the inn's dummy core via the master room after entering the dungeon core from the core room, but I took a moment to think in the master room.

Using this and that, this room is kept at a good temperature, its comfort isn't bad at all. Thinking about it, it's better than the futon in my room.

From the fighting I've seen so far, I can't think that the saintess would ever win against Rin in close combat. She's only able to avoid three or four attacks at the most. I don't think it'd be any easier for her even if she used magic.

Rumble.

Just then, there was an earthquake.

... Nnn? Magnitude 2, maybe 3...?

Yep, isn't that surprising... eh, wait a sec. Wasn't the master room in a different dimension? Why is it shaking?

Around the time I tilted my head in thought, Rokuko stampeded into the master room.

"Kehma! Hey, it's bad!"

"What's wrong? An earthquake around that strong isn't really worth getting worked up about."

"Earthquake? What are you talking about!? The saintess' attack, her attack!"

... Huh?

What're you saying, there's no way her attack on Rin would cause something like an earthquake, right? ... is what I thought while checking the map, but it does look like Rin's still fine. The saintess is still in front of the dungeon in the

first place.

Her attendant was also with her, shouldering the simple altar that looked like a rucksack.

The attendant bowed to the saintess before heading back to the hotel. The saintess headed into the dungeon.

“What is it?”

“Look here.”

Rokuko opened the menu and showed me something. It looks to be of the saintess from a bit ago.

... It’s showing the saintess offering a prayer to the altar.

Muttering something, she was praying so intensely that she was sweating. I tried turning up the audio.

[Death to dungeons, death to dungeons, break the cores, break the cores. Light God’s enemies are here. Oh Light God’s divine protection, place the power of the seal here now. Death to dungeons, death to dungeons...]

What a scary child. And yet the saintess was shining white. The normally invisible magical power was actually illuminating the room, the density was just that high... rather, the heck is this?

“That’s the first time I’ve heard such a long incantation... do you know what kind of magic it is?”

“Ah, so that was an incantation...? What a horrible one, oi.”

Then, I heard the incantation’s key word spoken.

[Following the gods’ agreement, for three days, seal this dungeon—[Treaty].]

The magical power that had been gathering around the saintess blasted out towards the dungeon.

Looks like that’s what caused the earthquake. Still, the village didn’t shake at all. Rokuko and all of the dungeon monsters seem to have felt the quake though. As humans, neither Meat nor Ichika appear to have felt it though... so I’m also a monster? Huh.

The recording ended there.

“Seal the dungeon? The heck kind of thing is that...”

“Seal...? —, look, Kehma! The DP catalog!”

“Eh?”

When I opened the menu to check out the DP catalog—
—with red seals across the board, they said [Use Disabled: 71 Hours Remaining].

Sealing DP functions... that’s a thing?
Installing rooms and traps, as well as summoning monsters. They’re all sealed.
The only thing we can do is restore traps and damaged walls.
The gacha’s sealed too... can’t sell weapons and armor either. Ah, it looks like
we can still get daily necessities, sweet bun kinds of items and treasure items
like jewels.

I don’t really understand, but she said something about a [Gods’ Agreement] at
the end of the incantation. So there was a thing like that?

“This... really is a dungeon seal, huh.”

Not being able to set up new traps and rooms meant that the dungeon’s
growth and change would halt. It makes things like augmenting passages and
similar stuff impossible. Moreover, thinking about the fighting strength side of
things, you wouldn’t be able to summon monsters or reinforce them with arms.
It means that you’d only be able to watch. That is, normally.

“O-oooh... really!?”

“Though we can still manage since we have [Create Golem], ordinary dungeons
probably wouldn’t have any hands or legs to use.”

“R-right! Good job Kehma! Now, repel that saintess!”

“Yeah. Guess I’ll do my best making golems?”

Still, speaking of dungeon monsters... what about Rin, who’s just a free-loader
at our dungeon?

Well, even if it was affected, it’d probably just have felt the quake, so it’s all
good.

I headed to Nerune’s laboratory, which was researching magic golem—... err,
gargoyles.

Nerune was working together with Gar-kun, her gargoyle assistant, engraving magical formations into golem-made clay boards. Taking a look, it seems to be a magic formation that emits fire like a lighter. It's pretty small, about three centimeters in diameter. There were eight arranged in a circular pattern.

"Ah, master. What do you think? I got the idea from that cake the other day, I tried making it able to heat things efficiently by arranging the eight magic formations into a circle~"

"... Looks like a portable stove. By the way, how's the magic formation research going?"

"Yeah~, right now I'm using a scale where I can make several magic formations with a single magic stone, so I'm practicing drawing tiny magic formations~. It's a lot easier writing on these clay boards I got from Goshujin-sama, so I can make them really small~" [1]

It really is extremely detailed. I seriously want a magnifying glass... Nn?

"You can miniaturize it if you can draw those elaborate grooves... I mean, if you can engrave them?"

"Yes, it'll be a completed magic formation once a magic stone is melted into the grooves. But my eyes and dexterity isn't enough going any smaller..."

I took out the DP catalog... Yep, I can't use any of it after all. Still though, magnifying glasses fall under the category of daily necessities so I was able to exchange for it without any problems.

"This is...!? What is it, eh, everything's so big~!?"

"There aren't lens or glasses in this world?"

"Lens? Glasses~? There are~, they come with god's vanguard when they're summoned, equipped items that correct vision right~?"

Ah, so that's how they got here? So there wouldn't be any convex lens if there was never a farsighted hero, huh.

"Come to think of it, I heard that things below crystal balls look large when you use them~"

"Yeah, that's also a convex lens. Well, it'd be hard to engrave formations using a ball-shape though."

Now then, this solves her sight problem. Next is dexterity huh... let's think

about that later.

“That aside, this should work... Nerune, how many magic formations can you make by yourself per day?”

“U-ummm... in one day, ten is my limit, I think.... I’m not confident in accurately engraving any more than that~”

“... The only problem is that you can’t engrave the magic formations?”

“Only problem? That’s the most important part you know~. After that is occasionally dissolving magic stones~. If not for engraving, one or two hundred in a day’s no different, as long as there’s magic stones it’s alright you know~?”

That’s the most important part. Magic stones are treasure-type items, so I can buy them with DP.

“Well then, wanna do it? Two hundred a day.”

When I said that, Nerune just looked at me with wide eyes.
I just came up with a way to mass produce magic formations.
It’d be embarrassing if it failed after going this far though.
... I have to answer the saintess’ seriousness with my own.

Chapter 133 - The Saintess' Serious Mode 2

First off, let's engrave a single magic formation into a clay board. Then, pressing iron made soft by way of using [Create Golem] on it—to be more accurate, by operating it so that it would accurately fill the grooves—I completed a magic formation template.

Following that with another one softened by [Create Golem], I went to make a [Prototype].

There was a magic formation's grooves left behind when I separated the template from the [Prototype].

After that, I just normally melted a magic stone onto it to complete the formation.

“Aaand it works.”

“Uwaaah~...”

It actually worked when the magic stone finished filling it. I'm saved. Seeing the magic formation be completed, Nerune was surprised.

“There was a method like that... amazing~, how many could we make like this~?”

“Right? One or two hundred easily.”

To put it simply, it's a stamp... eh, I guess it's more like a printing press? Its size makes it so that I could mass produce however many I want.

“But master, no one but you can do this~”

“Nn? That's not true. It's troublesome making the molds, but so long as you have the mold you could do it with things like clay. You'd only need to bake the clay to improve its longevity too... as for it being weak to impacts, well, there's a lot of clay... Right. I'll make a [Mold to make molds] to produce clay molds. You can use the iron magic formation to mass produce clay molds, so if the clay molds break... get it?”

When I said that, Nerune solidified for a bit. She was probably thinking if that was actually possible in her head. ... Rather, there's even stuff like sealing letters with stamped wax, so I don't

think it should be strange for someone to have an idea like this. Maybe people kept it a secret to enhance the value of magic tools? That's definitely a possibility.

“Master, that's... I can do that right~!? This is a revolution you know~!?”

“While we're on the topic, why not combine the idea with making different letters and symbols into stamps?”

“No way~!? My master's calmly using his ideas to repaint history~!? Please wait, I'll take notes~!!”

Nerune noisily pulled out a notepad and took notes. You don't need to panic so much...

Well, with this, gargoyle mass production's looking closer than ever.

Then again, Rin is going to be defending us, so it's only in the one in a thousand chance... but that saintess' serious mode might be enough to defeat Rin.

I can't seem to get that seal thing out of my head and haven't felt like sleeping. That's why I thought it'd be a good idea to kill time and look into mass producing gargoyles.

It's a rare occasion, so I decided to seriously try doing it together with Nerune.

*

The first day that the saintess was taking it seriously. It was the first day, but she wanted to settle it that day.

Smoothly making her way through the dungeon, she moved to just before the room that the black wolf resided in. She was familiar to the area. Moreover, due to the effects of [Treaty] she had invoked through ceremony, the dungeon was weakened. She was able to advance all the more easily, she felt.

Weakened dungeons wouldn't have things like an increased number of new traps or new rooms. It was limited in that there was a three day time limit, but even so it was very useful for capturing dungeons.

In particular, the weakening would also cause boss monsters to be unable to revive. The black wolf was likely a boss monster for this dungeon, so it shouldn't be an exception to the rule.

So she only needed to beat it once. So long as she could kill it, even if she died as well, it would be alright. She now only had to watch out for traps and look for

the dungeon core.

... Perhaps, she was certain the black wolf was a dungeon boss simply judging by its strength. With dungeons whose deepest floors hadn't been captured, dungeon bosses would occasionally make their way up and appear on higher floors. It would happen from time to time.

The stronger and more warlike the dungeon boss, the more likely it would happen. Seeing as how the black wolf preemptively attacked the moment it laid eyes on intruders, that was almost certainly the case.

... Slap!

She fired herself up by clapping her cheeks. She then began to circulate her magical power as began to enter the room.

While continuing to mumble an incantation, she first looked looked inside. The black wolf turned its attention towards the entrance... the saintess clicked her tongue in her mind.

(As expected, it can notice even whispers?)

She entered the room immediately before the incantation completely. The black wolf dashed towards her in response. Despite its tail wagging adorably, it bared its fangs as it opened its large mouth, brimming with the desire to eat.

[Roooooar!]

The wolf bellowed. However, something to this extent wasn't enough to cause the saintess to cower. She knew that if she froze now, she would die. She pulled away from the first attack, dodging it. With a snap, the wolf's fangs stabbed through the place she had just been... She continued the incantation, not stopping. Seeing the base of its left leg twitch, the saintess dropped into a crouch. Immediately after, its right foreleg swept towards her from side. The wolf's paw sliced through the air just above her head, so fast that the air rang. It would have been dangerous if she hadn't dropped even a fraction of an inch lower. A few strands of hair fluttered through the air, the attack barely grazing the top of her head.

A cold shiver ran its way down her spine. A cold sweat worked its way down her forehead, but she knew from experience that it still wasn't over. The black wolf

would soon rush towards her, forcefully bringing its right foreleg down to collapse on her. Despite its reckless attacks and successive attacks, it was still adorable.

The saintess used the momentum of dropping into her crouch to roll towards the left, avoiding it.

Just then, she finally completed her incantation. Conveniently, the black wolf's flank was right in front of her.

Thrusting her right hand forward, she shouted.

“—[Ray of Judgement]!!”

The instant she spoke the last piece of her incantation, a flash of light surged forth from her. After barely a moment's delay, the black wolf's body was penetrated by the beam. Passing entirely through its body, it rammed into the ceiling, leaving a crater-like mark behind.

—Their fight was decided. The saintess grinned.

But the black wolf did not fall.

The saintess' vision flickered as her consciousness dimmed. By draining her magical power dry, she blacked out.

By the time she came to, she was already back at the inn, laying in a futon. She was the simple altar.

“Alka-sama, are you awake?”

“... Yeah.”

(What happened?)

The saintess tried to think about it, despite the complaints coming from her head after just having returned from death.

The light-attributed emperor class magic: [Ray of Judgement]. Greater than upper and top class magic, it was an offensive magic that could wipe out an army with a single attack, something that could be called a tactical class magic. A blow of justice that would smash evil to bits. It couldn't not be effective against the black wolf that was obviously a wicked existence... in truth, it had been able to open a large hole on the wolf's body.

It was a large hole, enough to see through to the other side. It was about large enough of a hole that a child might be able to go through it. However, despite

such a large hole being opened on its body, the wolf still snapped through her. It bit off the arm she was holding out, followed by her head. She was only vaguely able to remember it, but that was how she had died this time.

“Did you use [Ray of Judgement]?”

“Yes, it drained my magical power. Emperor class magic’s consumption is as intense as ever.”

(I used one of my trump cards, but I was still eaten?)

The saintess sighed.

“.. However, I opened such a large hole in it, it should be dead about now...! This match is my win.”

In the end, as she was able to continue on no matter how many times she died, she would win in due time. She thought that she might not have been able to gain victory this time due to her pressing time constraints—but she won. She decided to report the commission’s completion to the adventurer guild after confirming its corpse. With that, one of the reasons she had come to this dungeon would be accomplished.

The saintess sighed, contended.

Chapter 134 - The Saintess' Serious Mode 3

[I was a little, surprised.]

"I thought you were done in there as well!"

Rin was safe.

I thought it might've been a big loss for a large hole to have been opened on its body, but it appears that Rin [Opened the hole itself]. As expected of a slime, it's even able to do emergency evasion methods like that huh.

Though thanks to that, we have a huge hole in the room's ceiling now.

[When she, held out that hand, I got a bad, feeling.]

"As expected of Rin. You got my respect, boss."

[Kukuku, I am, strong, after all.]

You could say that again. Still, that saintess is also something. She somehow evaded Rin's attacks while chanting, managing to let off that cannon-like magic at close range. I don't think I'd be able to do that even if I knew I'd be fine dying.

[I'm a bit, hungry. Kehma, mind getting, eaten?]

"Nn? Sure, go for it."

[Nom. Om nom...]

Rin quickly gulped down the messenger golem. It feels like it's been a while since that happened. Also, it wasn't whether or not I'd get eaten, but if I minded it huh. Me getting eaten was already done and decided on huh... well, it's fine. Yep.

Looks like the saintess won't be able to defeat Rin after all. Mine dungeon's protector is a wall! [1]

... I might raise a flag if I keep going, so let's stop there.

For now, the saintess doesn't look like she's going to come back today, so how about I get back to the gargoyle mass production stuff? The main thing I'm working on right now is fire arm gargoyles that have thirty fire magic formations engraved onto their arms. I've made ten of them so far.

Using an iron golem as the base, I hybridized it with clay shoulders so that they wouldn't damage themselves with the heat... Their iron arms will be super hot because of the fire, so they'll burn stuff when they touch it. Fufufu. I also took the chance and polished them. It'll be awesome if they roared while glowing a hot red.

Although... it burns through a stupid amount of magic stones. It's to the point that it takes 10 DP worth of magic stones for their arms to be active for an hour. Because I'm using practically identical magic formations, they take up 300 DP per.

Looks like they'll be able to do various things too. Expand your dreams, gargoyles... [2]

... Huh? But hasn't it become a physical attack rather than a magical attack after all?

Hmmm, I could try it out if I summoned a ghost-type monster. Let's give it a shot when the saintess' seal expires.

*

The second day that the saintess was taking it seriously. So that she could confirm the black wolf's death, the saintess carefully looked into the room—and the black wolf looked back.

The saintess hurriedly took a distance from the room. To put it in a way easier to understand, she ran away.

She didn't hesitate at all. She knew firsthand that she would be dead if she delayed her judgement at all.

“Hah, haah, haah...”

After taking a sufficient distance, the saintess calmed her rough breathing. ... Impossible, was the wolf immortal? The gaping hole from the day before had closed as well. She thought about things like that.

There was nothing she could do but kill it immediately. Maybe it would die if she destroyed its head?

Is it an immortal beast? Still, as long as it was a monster that belonged to the dungeon, its healing should be slowed through the effects of [Treaty].

If it's a dungeon boss, all the more—

... Just then, the saintess realized that something was off.
There was nothing in common between the demons that appeared in the dungeon and the black wolf.

That was the usual trend for dungeons.
For example, fire-attributed, demi-human-type, or beast-type.
Right, that way, you could even call a dungeon's monsters the dungeon boss' subordinates.

The monsters that appeared in this dungeon—other than the jellies that appeared in places—could be roughly divided into being either goblins or golems.
Both kinds of monsters were close to being earth-attributed.
The demi-human goblins and the bio-magical golems. Their commonality was a bit weak, but—

—in a place like that, there suddenly appeared a dark-attributed beast type.

Going with the usual course of events, it wouldn't be odd for the boss monster to be a goblin or a golem. Something with a humanoid shape for example. It's not like the boss monster has to share things in common with all of the demons, but... at the very least, she'd never heard of something like a boss that didn't share anything in common with the other monsters.

Dark-attributed. Beast-type. Overwhelming physical strength. Immortal resilience. She couldn't find anything in common. It was obviously unnatural.

"... Perhaps, no, it's... it's not without precedence, it's possible..."

The saintess thought.

(Perhaps, is that black wolf a field monster that has no relation to the dungeon?)

She felt that was the correct answer.
According to the preparatory audit, this dungeon named [Ordinary Cave] originally only had goblins. It went through a transition phase, becoming able to also have traps and golems.
Moreover, magic swords as well.
Considering the course of events, it was a pretty possible thing that it was just a

field monster unrelated to the dungeon that took up residence here.

... The original encounter was near the second floor, causing the saintess to be summoned over. She heard from the guild's report that it had destroyed the [Gate of Wisdom].

In other words, wasn't that alone enough proof that it came from outside of the dungeon?

Using that conclusion... that black wolf was probably entirely unrelated to the dungeon.

In that case, [Treaty] wouldn't have any effect on the black wolf.

It was a very worrisome fact, but at the same time, that meant that since it wasn't related to the dungeon, that also meant it wouldn't revive if she completely defeated it.

Then she'd only have to go all the way this time.

The saintess made her decision.

She began the incantation for [Ray of Judgement]. In exchange for its strength versus wicked existences, this magic had an incredibly lengthy incantation. It was natural as something stronger than the upper class to be so long, but due to its incantation's length, it wasn't suited for combat. Instead, it was often used as a [Warning] of the light god punishing sins.

But the saintess held no doubt that it wouldn't be effective against the black wolf this time.

Because this time, she would aim for its head.

She looked into the room with the black wolf in it before the incantation completed.

The black wolf... wasn't there.

(... Huh? It's not there?)

She wondered. However, she couldn't stop the incantation once it was started.

Timidly, she took a step into the room. She thought that it might have hidden itself in a blind spot from the entrance, but that wasn't it... perhaps it had moved out of the room?

If it was a monster irrelevant to the dungeon, that might have been the case. It

would be strange for it to stay in a room that it knew might endanger its life if it stayed. It would only do something like that if it had circumstances as to why it couldn't move, was confident in its ability to win, or was just an idiot.

But what should she do? The incantation had already completed. Firing it for no reason would just cause her to collapse from running dry on magical power. She didn't have the time to stick around any longer.

[Gurururu...]

She heard the wolf's growl. From behind her.

“—[Ray of Judgement]!!”

The timing was great. She hadn't had much more time. Turning around to look at the damage the beam did, it coincidentally managed to hit the black wolf's head.

“I did it—!?”

The wolf's head burst open. However, the saintess felt a sizzling bloodthirst. Her body lost strength, falling down to the ground in accordance with gravity. ... The headless wolf's foreleg cut through the air, straight towards the saintess' upper body.

(Impossible—how is it moving without a head!?)

While her consciousness blurred due to running out of magical power, the saintess saw something unbelievable. A burbling black mass grew out from the area that its head should have been, producing a new head.

“Ha, haha... what... just what are you...!”

[Garoooo...!]

Snap.

The saintess was eaten by its newly-reformed head.

With only one day remaining, how could she bring down this black wolf?

The saintess couldn't even begin to guess.

Chapter 135 - The Saintess' Troubles

“... Did it miss?”

[No, it hit. It was, dangerous. Some of my body, was deleted.]

It looks like that light was actually too strong. Rather than Rin being hurt by it, the places touched by the light were eliminated in an instant. It only felt temporary pain and even though its body was gouged out by the resulting aftermath, the wounds didn't extend to areas beyond that.

After that, it simply regenerated itself. Rin wouldn't have been able to do that if it were a wolf demon... wait, it's a slime, so doesn't it have a core or something? Rin, where's your core? Looks like it's not in your head... can it move it to wherever it wants?

[So Kehma. Food time.]

“Want seconds? It's better to eat a lot if you're injured. I can send some normal golems if you want.”

[Yeah, do that.]

I mass-produced golems made with clay and sent them to the room that Rin was at. I can have as much excavated as needed even without being able to use DP, so it's fine so long as they're stone and clay.

The spawn rate of golems appearing from the magic formations I installed in the dungeon also dropped, so I have to keep making more. The golem's are working harder too.

As for Rin, it kept eating the stream of golems like they were never-ending soba noodles.

Even if it's a wolf, to be eating soba... it's not like it'd understand the reference though. Yep, never mind.

[Fuu, a bit, better.]

“Good then. One more day, please.”

[Nn.]

Then Rin finally ate the messenger golem that I was operating. What a reliable fellow. If it manages to last one more day, it'll be our win.

Still though, I get the feeling that the saintess' heart shattered in that assault today.

... Maybe she won't come tomorrow?

*

The saintess' hand was placed on her forehead.

She didn't know what to do. Even opening a huge hole in its body didn't work, neither did blowing its head off...

She wondered whether or not it'd somehow work out if she blasted its entire body away all at once.

But it would be impossible for the black wolf to allow that to happen. The difference between their strength was just too overwhelming. It was by sheer luck that she managed to hit it that last time.

... For now, she decided to head into the onsen. She barely had any time left to stay at the inn. She had no choice but to use the chance to enjoy it as much as she could. She felt sorry that she wasn't able to complete the commission or capture the dungeon, but... well, she set it aside for now.

She wore her bathing clothes and entered the onsen. She felt it was something even better than a large bath. It really was a luxury to her heart. This day, there was one of the inn's employees in the onsen. Ichika, the slave that had the Paveuran accent.

"Ah, Saintess-sama... are ya tired?"

"... Yes, you knew?"

"Well yeah. Want me to give ya a shoulder massage?"

"No, there's a massage chair in the room."

Ichika waded her way through the hot water, approaching the saintess. The saintess and Ichika commonly spent time together in the game room at the rat races, so they spoke to each other a lot.

"Bibibi's comin' out in today's race. I'm gonna make a killin' in one go!"

"... Hmm, that also sounds like a good idea."

Luck, huh? When it came to luck, the saintess felt she'd used up all of hers on hitting that black wolf's head with [Ray of Judgement]. It'd probably all be the same if she bet on the never-winning Bibibi though.

“Nn? Whatcha worryin’ about? I can hear ya out if you don’t mind me?”

“Yeah, it’s... not something I should talk about.”

“Well, well... things get easier if you just talk about them ya’know?”

“... Well, it’ll probably be alright if it’s Ichika.”

Then, opening with, “Keep it a secret from Village Chief-sama alright?”, she talked to Ichika about her troubles. She left parts out, but she spoke of having to return to her country, the black wolf’s existence, and that she couldn’t win because it was so strong.

She also talked about how she felt like her attendant had recently been staring at her butt with lewd eyes.

“Even Attendant-san’s a man...! Rather, does Saintess-sama’s doctrine so men’re no good?”

“That’s not the problem. If I had to say, I prefer zealous men like Village Chief-sama. That approach of his, and those presents... fufufu, love, I feel love!”

The presents were things that she had paid to obtain, but it appeared as though whether or not gifts came with tolls was a trivial matter to the saintess.

“Wait? That’s hopeless ya’know? Un, hopeless. The village chief already has a partner, that’d be two-timing~?”

“That’s no problem for the doctrine. So long as they have the resources for it, people may have as many partners as they wish. [Birth and spread across the lands, ruling everything]... that is Light God-sama’s teachings. I have the resources because I am a saintess, so I could just shelter Village Chief-sama’s partners.”

“The Light God’s Decree is amazing!? Ya’d even shelter them!?”

“It’s that natural? I am a saintess after all.”

The saintess huffed.

(The heck’s a saintess...)

Ichika thought. The answer to that was right in front of her, though.

“W-well, changin’ topics, that black wolf huh... can’t ya just run if ya can’t win? Failin’ the commission doesn’t mean ya have to die.”

“My reputation would decrease though. Besides, for a saintess to be unable to defeat a dungeon-nesting monster so close to Village Chief-sama...”

“Eh, wait, Saintess-san? Seriously? You’re seriously aimin’ for the village chief?”

“Setting aside whether I’m aiming for him, I would feel bad not returning his goodwill.”

“Hmm... but, ya can’t win yeah?”

“...”

The once again saintess placed her hand against her head.

“Knowin’ when to give up’s also important.”

“Even if you say that...”

“And between you and me, Hero-sama comes to this dungeon around once a month, so even if Saintess-sama doesn’t work hard it’s alright, yeah?”

“... Hero-sama? The empire’s... Hero-sama?”

Hearing that, the saintess nodded to herself.

“... I see, so even if I can’t win... that makes me feel a little better. Well, I’ll keep trying until the end though.”

“Really~”

The saintess’ troubles eased a little.

She felt getting into the onsen was a good idea.

Then,

If the empire’s hero tried capturing the dungeon... and wound up doing so before her, she felt it might be a good idea introducing him to the uncleared dungeon that remained in the Holy Kingdom. [1]

Furthermore, she bet a ton of money on Bibibi in that day’s rat race. It went magnificently.

Chapter 136 - The Saintess' Observations

The saintess' steps as she advanced through the dungeon were uneasy. She didn't believe that she could manage to win against the black wolf. But even so, she wouldn't run away, either.

The Holy Kingdom had a saying: [Nothing ventured, nothing gained]. Accordingly, the saintess challenged this dungeon with that intention. The saintess, unable to perfectly get over her worries, easily defeated the golems while dragging her feet.

"... Oh? Was there a wall here?"

No, that definitely shouldn't have been there. Something was off. According to the [Mapping] skill, there definitely should have been a passage there. The labyrinth's walls should have been fixed in place through [Treaty]'s effects, did the effect already run out somehow?

... That wasn't it. The power hadn't left into the dungeon's surroundings in a recoil as it would when the effects end. It hadn't turned into a situation where it contained none of the power.

There was no helping that there was no path, so she took a detour. There were walls in places that shouldn't have had walls, as well as passages in places that should have had walls.

... For some reason, neither [Mapping] nor [Dungeon Trap Detection] worked properly in this dungeon.

(... Really now, this is a mysterious dungeon.)

... And then she arrived at the black wolf's room. It just wound up happening. She took a decent amount of time being reluctant to go in.

"... Now... what do I do?"

Before she went inside, she stopped moving and decided to think of a strategy.

(Should I start the incantation...? Or maybe I should spend a little more time on it?)

[Oi.]

“... Nn?”

[Oi, you.]

She heard a voice from somewhere... was it an adventurers? Had adventurers other than herself made it this far in? She didn't see anyone... but she heard a terrifying voice coming from a shadow.

“... Where are you?”

[Above you.]

Told that, she looked up... and right there... was the black wolf.
It stood with all four legs on the ceiling.

“... Huh...?”

It walked in such a dignified manner that it gave her the illusion she was the one upside-down.

No, there was something even more important weighing on her mind.

Was it... the owner of that voice? No. Her imagination had already connected the two. This place was an area where no one else was. Above all, the wolf's mouth was moving.

[Good job, coming, human.]

It wasn't barking, but its manner of speech was clumsy, like it was cutting parts short. There was no doubting that the words were coming from its mouth.

“Y-you understand human speech...?”

[What, is it something, strange? I can talk in, others, too. Guru ruru... gau. See?]

“I don't understand wolf language.”

[... Really.]

Certainly, monsters with high intelligence could understand human speech, some could even talk. For example, dragons were well-known in being able to. It wasn't impossible for a strong wolf to talk using human speech like this.

Moreover, the saintess' thought of this black wolf coming from outside the dungeon was once again reinforced. It was hard to believe that a monster that only ever stayed in a dungeon would interact with humans enough to learn their language. Besides that, very few humans would come here.

The black wolf abruptly parted from the ceiling, making a half-turn midair and landing on the ground. Instinctively intensifying her vigilance, the saintess took a stance. However, it didn't appear as though it was about to attack.

“... Why were you on the ceiling?”

[Killing time?]

It didn't appear there was any deep meaning behind it.

(How in the world... did it stick up there?)

If it had made a surprise attack from that position, she would've died without even making a sound. In other words, it didn't intend to kill the saintess... for now, at least.

She couldn't figure out what its reason was. Maybe it was merely a whim, just it playing with an enemy that it could kill at any moment. Not much different than a cat playing with a ball of yarn. All of the decisive power were in the black wolf's paws.

Even so, that was good. This was a good opportunity for the saintess to observe the black wolf. Even if the hero would be the one to come and defeat it in the future, she could contribute by leaving behind information.

She had already obtained new information: it could understand human speech. Conversations could be held as well—she was establishing that right then.

Even if it was due to her negligence, she was gaining valuable time and information.

“... So, what do you want?”

[You are, tasty.]

“... Well, unfortunately, I haven't eaten myself before.”

[In other words, to me, it's like, you're giving, food.]

The saintess smiled wryly to herself. In the end, this wolf only ever saw her as food. While she was fighting desperately, thinking about actual life and death, thinking that her attacks might do something—as far as the wolf was concerned, her efforts only wound up being at the level of food resisting adorably and jumping from its plate towards its mouth, ready to be eaten. Moreover, she was delicious food that went out of its way to be eaten.

The difference between their strength was too great.

“H-hmph. So, you intend on doing something?”

[Yeah.]

The black wolf laughed.

Catching glimpses of the fangs that could easily deprive her life in an instant, the saintess felt a chill creep down her back.

[I'll make you, my follower.]

... Why did it just say?

The saintess took almost half a minute before she registered what the wolf just said.

Chapter 137 - Emergency

“... Huh?”

An unexpected ‘saintess follower’ declaration. My head blanked out for a moment. Rather, it can talk in human language? Oi.

Which reminds me, what did Rin say when it made me its follower? I think it was something like: [You, give food, to me. Therefore, you’re my, follower.]

Let’s think back on what the saintess has done since coming here. Once per day, she went into the dungeon... and was eaten by Rin.

Just how is that different from me being eaten by Rin while in the golems?

“... It’s the same!? Shit! It’s an emergency!”

Rather, it declared that the saintess tasted better. What to do... what to do!? First off, I called Rokuko. I have a direct line of communication to the dummy core in Rokuko’s room from the master room.

“Oi Rokuko, it’s an emergency! Urgent meeting now!”

“Wai—Kehma!? Don’t come in so suddenly!”

Rokuko was in the middle of changing her clothes. Yep, sorry.

“Well, that aside—”

“It’s not something to set aside you know!? Wait, emergency? What happened?”

“Rin made the saintess its follower.”

“OK I get it. Sounds bad.”

As expected of the recent Rokuko, smart. She understood it immediately and quickly put on an outer garment, going into the master room. Meanwhile, just thirty seconds had passed.

“The saintess is a follower... so, what now?”

“I don’t know, there’s been no movement.”

Then, the saintess appeared to have reactivated. Let’s eavesdrop on their

conversation.

[Your... follower?]

[Yeah, follower. Gave me, good food, so follower, right?]

... Wait, come to think of it, wouldn't that cause everything about me to be exposed to the saintess? I don't think it'd be much of a problem since I wouldn't be recognized as the golem though...

[What is, it? If there's, a problem, say it.]

[... Umm, right. Then, I want to ask... did you come from outside of this dungeon?]

[Called, by boss.]

[B-boss?]

[Yeah.]

Particular about that point, Rin didn't yield.

[... Y-your boss comes from outside of this dungeon?]

[Yeah. Because I, am strong. This, is mine.]

I've gotten used to holding conversations with Rin since I've been doing it so much, but it looks like she's having trouble with it after all. By the way, to put it simply, it's saying: [Yes. I came from outside of the dungeon. While on the subject, I am super strong so I control the dungeon and received this room.]

I have a knack for conversation? It's experience, experience.

[... You took over the dungeon...? Could something like that be...?]

[Kuwafu, if there's, nothing else, I'm eating.]

[P-please wait a moment! By eating, umm—you eat your followers?]

[? Is that, a problem? No matter, how many times, you are eaten, you return.]

[... Today is no good. After that, it's fine... I want to see the dungeon core, do you know where it is?]

[Dungeon core? What's that?]

Come to think of it, Rin doesn't know about dungeon cores huh. I didn't tell it about them when I asked it it wanted to be a subordinate to the dungeon. It refused anyway, though.

[... A shining orb, about this big?]

[... Hmm... well, there's one.]

[Please show me! Where is it!?]

[Ah, here. Follow.]

I doesn't know what a dungeon core is, but it does know about shining orbs... right, it did sleep in the core room at first huh.

And so, Rin slowly walked with the saintess following behind it.

Alright. It's a defensive fight. Everyone—other than Kinue-san—gathered in the master room as the dungeon's defensive fighting strength... Kinue-san will be dealing with the inn by herself.

“Goshujin-sama, the haniwa, ready any time.”

“Wall golems're already in motion. Do you want 'em deployed to make them take a detour?”

As usual, Meat and Ichika felt like they were already used to these things.

“Many legged golem archers, ready to mobilize, master!”

“Gargoyle forces, ready to move out~! Filled to the brim with magic stones, so many~!”

“Ooh, new troops! Could you lend them to me too?”

“Yeah~, use them however you want~!”

Rei had the many legged golems, with Nerune and Rokuko moving the gargoyle force.

“Alright, let's start this defensive war... ah, let's evacuate the dungeon core first. Right now the real dungeon core is in the spot right below where Rin sleeps after all.”

“Got it! Should I use castling with my room?”

“Yeah, please do.”

After Rin left the core room, I put the dummy core back at the deepest area. I'm still making another route.

Most recently, I think I've been putting a bit too much effort into researching magic tools.

... Then, by moving the dungeon core towards the village, the defensive war will be carried out safely. Even if they come to the dungeon's interior where the dummy core was, there wouldn't be able problems if it was destroyed.

Even if Rin takes the saintess into the core room, it'll be alright. Man, security is wonderful.

“Ah...”

“Hmm? What’s wrong?”

“Castling, unusable—for fifteen hours. Because it’s sealed.”

Rokuko spoke with a pale face.

Uh? Then...

“Perhaps, are you saying, we can’t escape?”

“Correct, I am saying that we can’t escape.”

I felt sweat drip down my back.

“Hey, it’s been a while since I’ve heard death’s footsteps...”

... The master room filled with silence due to my mutter.

“... Kehma. What did you just...”

“Ah, sorry. I said something strange.”

“That’s super cool! I want to use that next time! Death’s footsteps!”

“Stop, please. I’m sorry, super sorry!”

While I apologized earnestly to Rokuko, whose eyes were sparkling, we prepared our defenses.

At any rate, so long as we can kill the saintess one time, it’ll be our victory. The saintess only has until today, after all.

Chapter 138 - The Saintess and the Black Wolf

With the black wolf as her guide, Saintess Alka followed it obediently. She wondered how it had come to this, but she couldn't think of an answer. However, since she had always dove into dungeons by herself, she didn't find it so bad being guided in the dungeon. She even felt like she'd become a tamer.

[Mu? ... Was there a wall here?]

Correction, they were lost.

However, the wolf said something outrageous in the next instant.

[... Destroy it? Kun kun... yep, I can.] [1]

“Eh—you can destroy it?”

[I can. I, am strong. Even if I, destroy it, it's fine.]

For destroying a dungeon's wall, the saintess felt it was a very out-of-the-norm monster.

However, inside [Treaty]'s effect, the saintess knew that dungeon walls somehow mended themselves at a ridiculous speed. To the extent that they would repair after just 0.1 seconds even if it was completely destroyed. She had even gotten herself caught inside of a wall, dying. Getting crushed was painful.

“No, it's alright. Let's search for a path.”

[Okay.]

The black wolf retraced its path. Trying to follow it, the saintess suddenly heard the sound of something moving fast.

“—!”

She tilted her neck to the side, inclining it on reflex. Immediately after that, an arrow cut through the space her head had just been at.

Then a pain followed. An arrow hiding in the shadow of the first one managed to strike her in the shoulder.

A sniper. Moreover, an advanced one. Looking in the direction the arrows came

from, she saw a golem with two bows equipped in both of its hands. No, ‘both of its hands’ was a bit off. Why? Because it had four hands and four feet. A hand extended from its back, re-nocking the bow with arrows.

However, the black wolf preyed on it immediately. It never released the next two arrows.

“Ku-, golems... no choice. ■■, ■■■■■■■■—[Healing].”

She forcibly pulled the arrow out. There was flesh still attached to the arrowhead due to [Spines] on it, but she didn’t pay it any attention. Since it was somewhat numbed, she gouged out some more of the wound, rubbing antidote into it as she placed recovery magic on herself. The magical power’s healing of her wound she had gouged out was compensated for, recovering.

The black wolf returned.

[Oi, it shot, my follower, so I ate it, was that bad?]

“... No, you saved me.”

[Hmm, good then. Let’s go.]

The black wolf resumed walking as if nothing had happened.

... The saintess once again followed behind it. Unexpectedly, she realized that she was being defended.

It wasn’t too big of a deal. She was simply shot by a variation species of golem. That’s all.

It was a monster that used a large amount of poison, as well as a monster that used a bow and arrows. It was even a monster that had four arms and legs.

However, if the wolf didn’t deal with the golem before she was hit with another poisoned arrow, it might have been too late for her to cope with it.

[Mu.]

The wolf flicked its tail... four arrows dropped to the ground.

The saintess noticed the new attack as well. However, she hadn’t realized the number was doubled. There were two of that variation species this time... they were variation species, but there were several of the same kind... maybe it was a new species? If so, she’d name these hecatoncheir golems or something. [1]

[What do, you want?]

“... I’ll defeat them.”

The saintess retrieved her battle hammer from her [Storage]. They were still golems. Even if they were variation species, their basis shouldn’t have changed. The wolf didn’t interfere this time... it didn’t attack the saintess from behind either.

She quickly put an end to the golems and went back to the black wolf.

[Then, let’s go?]

“... Yeah.”

The saintess had always dove into dungeons by herself. She had also died alone, and captured them alone. It would have been a different story if she had comrades that could be revived, but unfortunately, she hadn’t met someone like that so far. Even if she searched for someone like that, they likely didn’t exist...

And so, this was her first time being defended.

It was surprising that the one who should have been her enemy—the wolf—was the one doing it, though.

... She felt a thump in her chest.

The antivenom she’d taken a while before might have been a little slow in circulating around.

[Mu? This is also, a wall... Destroy it?]

“No, I have [Mapping], so let’s look for another way. Destroying it is a last-resort measure.”

[Really? Well, okay... Follow me, close. You, are weak, after all.]

“... Right. Fufufu.”

The saintess obediently followed the black wolf closely, who was searching for a path.

This was also the first time she walked onto the battlefield behind someone.

Even when she asked for a guide, the saintess walked in the lead. The saintess should defend others, because they had limited lives, because the saintess was the strongest.

But right now, she was being protected by a wolf much stronger than herself.

(I am weak, so I’ll follow.)

The saintess walked through the dungeon with fresh feelings that she had never experienced before.
She even considered spending a little extra time in the dungeon's capture.

Chapter 139 - Euma-senpai

The black wolf and the saintess walked together in the dungeon. They were attacked by golems several times on the way, but the saintess would either stop them herself rather easily or the black wolf would prevent all attacks against her. Either way, the saintess cleaned them up in the end.

The golems weren't just the multi-armed variations that wielded bows, but the spiked shell tortoise-like golems rushed her as well... The saintess took care of them like the other golems, she wasn't having any problems.

But there weren't just golems; there were traps as well. The saintess got caught in a pitfall trap, but the black wolf saved her by holding her in its mouth. Swords occasionally burst out of door that the black wolf attempted to open.

Incidentally, the wolf stayed calm despite being struck by multiple swords. The saintess asked it it would like [Healing] used on it, but it simply responded with: [I'm not injured, nor tired, so why?]
... It looked like it had been pierced all the way through though.

Meanwhile, the entire floor was made visible through [Mapping]... Soon there wouldn't be any ways to go. It was a last resort measure, but it was about time that they'd have to try breaking a wall.

They found a golem sitting defenseless in front of a wall. It looked like an ordinary golem... however, this golem was the most varied species the saintess had ever seen.

[Gururu, garu, gow.]
[Mu? ... Gururu, goooarga, gururu.]

The golem spoke with wolf words. It wasn't like it was just randomly barking, it was definitely talking with the black wolf. In any case, the saintess had no idea what was being said. After talking with growl-like sounds for a while, the wolf faced the saintess.

[Garuru, gururuu?]
"Eh?"

[Ah, human, right. Mmm, what is, your name?]

“Ah, um, yes, it’s Alka.”

Asked by the black wolf, the saintess answered obediently.

[Let me, introduce. Your senpai, Euma. Euma, your junior, Alka. Get along.]

“Eh? Senpai?”

[... I’m Euma. Your senpai as a follower. If possible, I’d love if you could hurry and leave.]

It used human speech. With a strange quality of voice, it unmistakably had just introduced itself. She felt that it somewhat resembled the village chief’s voice.

“You’re... a golem, right?”

[Did you not expect a golem to talk? You’ve been talking with Rin, so I don’t think it should be too much of a surprise.]

“Rin?”

[My, name. Call me boss, Ke—... Euma.]

So the black wolf’s name was Rin?

The saintess engraved that name into her mind.

[Oi, Alka. It’d be a favor to your senpai, could you leave?]

“I can’t do that. I... only have until today.”

[That so? Unfortunate... Oi, boss. I’m going to be defeating this one after this, please don’t get in the way.]

Slowly, Golem Euma stood up with its back still against the wall.

“Wait, what do you mean?”

[It’s like this. You’re an adventurer that came to capture this dungeon, and I’m... a dungeon monster, different from boss. Isn’t it obvious?]

Suspiciously human-like Euma shrugged its shoulders as it responded. Even though it was a golem. However, dungeon monsters would fight to defend the dungeon. It was something natural.

“Monsters with intelligence are not bound to dungeons, there have been studies that show that they survive even if the dungeon core is destroyed. Euma-san, wouldn’t that path be more convenient?”

[No, it wouldn't. I strive to protect the dungeon core after all.]

Was it a boss, then? But was it alright to allow a boss to leave the boss room and wander around?

[You might have noticed already, but you have to kill me to leave this floor—moreover, I will battle using my subordinates... Rin, could you please not interfere? Honestly, you've already gotten in the way of the arrows and traps.]

[Hmph, of course. Euma, and Alka, are weak. So, I'll defend, both of you. After all, I am, your boss!]

"Huh?"

[Eh?]

Apparently, Euma didn't understand what Rin meant either. It looked just as puzzled as the saintess was.

[... Then, please don't stop me from repulsing Alka.]

[Refused. I'll defend.]

[... Then will you stop going any deeper than this?]

[Hmm? No. I promised, after all.]

Giving up trying to communicate with Rin, Euma turned directly to the saintess.

[Even if you go, it's useless. What you're looking for isn't beyond here. I put it away.]

"... That's a lie, isn't it?"

The saintess muttered.

[... A lie? What's your basis? I don't lie.]

"My [Eyes of Truth] can tell when people are lying. Right now, you're bright red you know?"

[That so... then, what'll you do?]

Bang!

The saintess swung her battle hammer, but it was blocked with a black tail. Euma didn't budge an inch. What it that confident in itself, or did it simply know that Rin would stop it?

[... Rin, don't interfere.]

[Interfere? Why.]

[The conversation's gone off track for a while now. Oi, Alka. If you don't kill me, I won't let you advance.]

"Boss? Since this is the case, is it alright?"

[Can't be, helped. If it's between, fellow followers, can't be helped. Euma, eating you.]

Immediately following that, Euma got eaten by Rin... What happened to protecting it?

"That's... protecting?"

[It's all right, Euma can revive, over and over, too.]

With a crumble, the wall that was behind Euma's back was broken. Beyond it was the path onward.

Chapter 140 - The Saintess and Flame Cavern

“... Phew, job complete...”

“Good job, Kehma.”

Manipulating the messenger golem I named Euma, I myself was sending my voice from down a tunnel on the other side of a wall.

I somehow managed to trick her by telling Rin: [My name is Euma in human speech, so please use that.]

By the way, the named monster list didn't get [Euma] added to it. Come to think of it, Tester didn't appear there either. I guess golems made through [Create Golem] aren't counted?

There was a chance I'd be exposed due to my voice, but the golem lacked the components to reproduce high frequencies... making it have a [Crackling Voice]. It'll be great if that was enough.

If pushed to say something, I could just say: [I'm just mimicking the voice of an adventurer that had come to this floor in the past.]

The golem really is just mimicking my voice too, so it's not a lie.

I mean, I couldn't not go out after being unable to repel the saintess due to Rin, so I tried to somehow get her to leave as a fellow follower.

... I really hoped that Rin would just stop protecting the saintess, but... unfortunately, that didn't happen.

At any rate, the other side of the wall I took position at... well, the saintess is currently heading towards the magma area, which leads to [Flame Cavern].

I even said that she wouldn't find what she was looking for, too... Her objective is a dungeon core. [Flame Cavern] has a dungeon core as well, so even me saying that I put it away was a lie. Yep, I didn't say something true!

But still, that saintess had a lie-detecting skill after all huh. It might a bluff, but accepting it as true shouldn't be a problem.

... For it to work through a golem is crazy. Was it a bluff after all? I thought that, but I recalled how wantonly she tossed her money around. There's a definite

possibility that she's been given preference from her country due to having that rare skill as well.

Let alone her return chance, her revive chance is 100%, so it wouldn't be wasted for them to have her learn a rare skill through a scroll.

At any rate, I was defeated and the path opened. However, that path doesn't lead to our dungeon core. This should buy us enough time.

Let's take a break. The golems and traps that I went to such pains to prepare, as well as the poison arrows that were made from the left over poison from when I tried poisoning Rin were all useless, so I wound up having no choice but to make an appearance myself...

... And so, this should buy us enough time. Making their way through [Flame Cavern] should take quite a while. That place isn't sealed after all... It isn't... right? They are connected...

They probably would've complained if they got affected.

"You did it, master, Rokuko-sama."

"... Rei, your skill in using the bow golems has improved a lot huh."

"Yes, golems are the only means I have of dealing damage... so I practiced. I bought archery skill scrolls with my DP salary... fufu, even so, I can't win against Meat-senpai though. What is it with that senpai? Is she truly an ordinary beastkin child? Aaah, seeing her evade those arrows soaring at her so easily, ahahaha, it's unbelievable, ahaha... haha..."

Rei spoke with emotion and somewhat distanced eyes as she laughed dryly. Seriously, Rin's wasting our subordinates' efforts.

Right now, Rin is heading to the entrance of Rokuko's magma area—which leads to [Flame Cavern]—along with the saintess.

Last time, it hesitated in entering, but it's not like magma is particularly bad to it. It said that it was hot and stuffy, but it wanted a more calm place to sleep at. It was a reason anyone could agree with.

In addition, it seems it'd be fine even after drinking magma like water... Magma isn't H2O, so thinking about it, it might've been a joke.

[Boss, the atmosphere is different here.]

[... I haven't gone, farther than this. I don't know, the way.]

The saintess and Rin proceeded through the stepping stones, leaping. That's unexpected, did she lose her unwillingness to call Rin 'boss'?

"... It's pointless sending out the oddball golems with Rin as an enemy huh..."
"The gargoyles I worked so hard on didn't do well either~"
"Alright! My turn! Feni, get them~!"

Thinking that it would be odd for them to not be attacked at all, Rokuko sent Feni out.

[Mu! That's a... phoenix!? C-c-catch it!]
[Eh? Hmph, this is also, Euma's follower, though?]
[Tamer! Tamer! Please catch it, the first saintess' partner was a phoenix! I-I also, I also want a phoenix as my partner—!]

"Feni, run away—!?"

The saintess started trying to capture Feni, so it quickly ran. The saintess tried to run after it by jumping into the magma sea, but Rin stopped her.

[That is, my follower's. Don't. If you want, ask, Euma.]
[Uuuu... t-then when I destroy the dungeon core...! Before this place collapses...!]

I wonder what she'd say if I told her I'd give her Feni if she stopped going after the dungeon core... Ah, Rokuko's staring at me. Nope, nope. Definitely wouldn't do that.

After that, Rin found the entrance into [Flame Cavern] and went through it. The saintess followed him.
I can finally go to sleep—

[—Boss, from here on is a different dungeon... It's probably [Flame Cavern]. Let's head back.]
[Mu? Okay. Another guy's, house, huh? Then maybe, next time.]

—Immediately after I thought that, the saintess and Rin turned around.
... Eh, how'd she know? The heck, saintess? Oi.

"... What'll we do, Kehma?"
"Now that it's come to this, we can only meet them head on. I'll lead them to

the boss room. Can't be helped... I wanted to keep it as a trump card, but I guess it's time to unveil the new haniwa? As well as the special anti-Rin golem."

"But Kehma, when did you get the time to make something like that?"

I always take the time prepare things though?
After all, I don't want to die.

Chapter 141 - The Saintess and the Boss

“In the first place, this is the opposite direction that boss tried heading at the start.”

[... That so? Good job, noticing.]

“Yes, of course. Euma-senpai is quite the tactician, isn’t he.”

[That so? Euma, is weak. Now, are we, going?]

While on their way back across the stepping stones, Saintess Alka was boasting.

She was also walking side-by-side with Rin without the slightest sense of unease.

Unfortunately, she couldn’t find the phoenix anywhere, so it had likely hidden itself somewhere... it was very unfortunate.

Returning from the hot floor full of magma, they came back to the stone-paved and stone-bricked dungeon.

“This was the first place that boss was going to go.”

Using [Mapping], they headed through the dungeon while the saintess checked the map with her skill.

There should have been a wall there. However, it had disappeared because they defeated Euma.

“... I see, so Euma-senpai was the key?”

[Umu, trouble, some.]

Then, without any traps—once again, they saw a golem sitting down in front of a wall.

It was Euma. The feeling it gave off was obviously different from other golems. It was only sitting as normal, but for some reason it felt like a human.

When Euma saw the saintess and Rin, it suddenly raised its right hand and greeted them.

[Yo. It would’ve been great if you just went back, though.]

“Your plan was excellent. Normal adventurers probably would have been

caught by it, senpai.”

[Haah... I'll ask again—can you not just leave?]

“I refuse.”

[Rin, you don't feel like stopping Alka either I take it?]

[Un? Right. I don't.]

[Then I'll just crush you two. Alright? ... I'll be waiting in the room right after this.]

[Kukuku, can, you? Good, show me!]

With a roar, Rin ate Euma. Its momentum destroyed the wall as well.

... Just beyond it was a door. It was a luxurious one, the door practically declaring itself to be a boss room's.

“Euma-senpai talked about defeating boss, could it?”

[Kukuku, I wonder. That guy's, even weaker, than Alka... but his head, it's good.]

Euma seemed to have an intelligence like that of a human—no, better than a human's. What would stand in their way as the dungeon's boss?

The saintess braced herself.

The door opened with a heavy, dull sound.

Inside was a statue of a dimly shining iron knight. It was a knight wearing full plate armor, riding a horse and carrying a lance. However, its face could be seen as its face guard was up... it was a face that could only be described as blank, like an egg with holes in it.

Where was Euma hiding?

The saintess advanced slowly.

Blood thirst. The saintess quickly stepped back twice. Just then, the lance pierced into the place she was just at.

It raised the lance overhead and—bang!

Rin cut in and stopped it.

It was a statue, but it moved... it was a golem. It was the first time she had seen a horse-shaped golem, but it was probably possible if it was a boss.

It was a great surprise attack. If Rin weren't there, it might have been decided just then.

[Kukuku, Eumaaa, that you, Euma!? Now you're, a horse! Huh!?!]

Rin laughed in delight.

[... Now then, let's do it.]

The knight golem spoke, lowering its face guard. That was unmistakably Euma's voice. Taking a short distance, Euma started again.

[Kukuku! Kuku kuku! I'm coming, Euma!]

Rin and Euma dashed towards each other at the same time, colliding... is what the saintess thought, but Euma quickly leapt from the horse. Only the horse shot towards Rin.

[This is, from before...—!?]

When Rin ate the horse, just after opening its mouth to an unbelievable size, the horse exploded. Something white shot out towards the inside of Rin's throat.

[Gugee!? Guha, pe, pe—! T-this is, s-salt!!]

[There's more where that came from, have as much as you want.]

A door opened behind Euma. A few white horses dashed in from it. Once five of them had entered, the door slammed shut.

[W-wait, Euma!? These, are all, salt!?]

[There's more where that came from, have as much as you want.]

Using that same phrase, Euma spoke in a heartless fashion. The white horses made of salt... the salt horses started relentlessly chasing after Rin.

While watching Rin take a distance from the salt golems and Euma, the saintess stopped the attack coming from behind her with her battle hammer.

"The salt makes your footsteps stand out even if you try to hide, Euma-senpai!"

[... ...]

"Oh? Not talking, Euma-senpai? You could complement me, you know? Or is it that you can only speak with one of your bodies?"

It was a second knight-type golem. It was meant to be a surprise attack fully aimed at exploiting her carelessness. However, the saintess was sure that

something would appear because it was Euma, so she prepared herself. Rather, she was disappointed it was only something to this extent.

[... Now then, let's do it.]

"Yes, let's, senpai."

Speaking the exact same words as it did to Rin, the battle begun.

Euma's swordsmanship was close to that of a knight's. However, its capability was sloppy and was that of a C-Rank's at most.

The saintess warded off the knight-type golem's assault with the battle hammer held in her hands. She couldn't expect for Rin, who was currently being chased by the salt horses, to protect her this time. However, she felt that she could straightforwardly win this battle.

"Fufufu, compared to boss... this is easy!"

The sound of metal striking metal resonated through the air. The saintess' battle hammer was made from a mineral that was even stronger than the metal called black steel. As for Euma, its whole body was made of iron, same with its armor and weapon.

Whenever it stopped the saintess' attacks, its sword would tremble with a jarring scream and have a mark left on it from her hammer.

"Hora hora hora! Good, there, there, and here!" [1]

The damage it was taking quickly became apparent through its movements as it gradually wore down. The saintess continued mercilessly denting Euma.

Then, Euma staggered, crouching down. Throwing away its sword, it thrust its left hand out in front of it.

"What? That's all? Fufufu, you threw your sword away and gave up? But I can't get to the dungeon core without defeating Euma-senpai right? So, I'll be finishing you off!"

[... There's more where that came from, have as much as you want.]

Euma pointed up with its right hand. With a start, she looked up while still keeping Euma in her sight and staying wary of a possible trap. However, there was nothing there... no, when she took a better look... it was the ceiling. It was white.

Immediately after that, the ceiling collapsed. It was a massive amount of salt.

Despite the salt horse and Euma—who were both golems—being entirely alright with it, Rin and the saintess were momentarily forced to close their eyes.

[Mogaa!? Pe—, peh—! Disgusting! Very, disgusting! Ugeh, peh!]

Rin's agonized voice could be heard. Apparently, it appeared to have somehow wound up being fed a salt horse when it was forced to close its eyes. Rather, was salt its weak point? No, it definitely was. That's why, even though she didn't know why that was the case, Euma had prepared a massive amount of salt to use.

"Kuh—!"

When she opened up her eyes while solidifying her defense with her battle hammer, Euma was standing in front of her. It didn't have a weapon, it probably got lost during the violent falling of the salt. Approaching, Euma's left hand was much closer to the saintess than it was before.

—In the next instant, something tiny shot out from Euma's left hand, piercing the saintess' heart.

"... Huh?"

She coughed.

Blood came from her mouth. It appeared to have also pierced her lung.

Despite her wearing an iron breastplate, it pierced her all the way through.

"Despite... golem, you used... magic? ... When did... you chant...?"

Even if she tried using recovery magic, her enemy wouldn't give her the chance. Blood was filling her lungs to start with, even breathing was becoming impossible. Her speech started sounding like Rin's style as well. She knew from experience that she was about to die.

"Gofu... Fufu... I was, careless. I guess, it's my, defeat... isn't... it..."

[...]

Euma didn't speak. Naturally, it wasn't as though it needed to send her off peacefully to her next life or anything. The saintess would revive after all.

If it exposed its methods, she could take measures against them the next time. Therefore, it said nothing, nor did it answer her.

Even so, the saintess was able to make some guesses. Her clothes were wet. Therefore, it was probably water magic. As it was able to penetrate her iron breastplate, it was probably at least an upper class magic. Euma, rather than being a golem, was probably a subspecies of gargoyle. She didn't understand how it was able to use magic without using an incantation, but she definitely wouldn't mistake what she just saw. Therefore, next time. Next time...!

... She didn't have a next time. For some time after this, the saintess wouldn't be able to dive into this dungeon. That was one of [Treaty]'s restrictions.

[Mu—!? O-oi, Alka! You got, killed!?]
“Gu, my apolo—gies, boss... I'll be, back, some... time...”

Unable to oppose the darkness that slowly took over her consciousness, the saintess' eyes gradually closed—

(... Aah, I at least wanted boss (Rin) to eat me in the end. But, it can't because I'm covered in salt right now...)

—while thinking about such an irrelevant thing.

Chapter 142 - In the Master Room

“Booyah! Saintess down!”

I pumped my fist into the air.

It's great we defeated her. If that didn't defeat her, we would've had to fall into a war of attrition with the fifty fire arm gargoyles we have stockpiled.

It would've been pretty unfortunate if we weren't able to hide the gargoyles after coming this far.

There's no reason for Rin to want to target the dungeon core, so it was going to be our total win so long as we could defeat the saintess.

“... So strong. Is that the gargoyle Kehma's been researching?”

“Yeah, it's a gargoyle specified test arm.” [1]

Water Cutter. That was the identity of the attack that cut through the saintess.

Magic formations that produce water were crammed inside the golem's left arm, around a hundred of them. Making a small elongated cone shape inside of the arm, I inserted that amount of formations into the arm.

It was seriously dangerous when one of them exploded during testing. Man was I happy that I built a separate room alongside the laboratory.

I ultimately managed to make it by encasing it with three-layered black steel, engraving the magic formations with materials from plastic bottles—daily necessities—and filling it all with water from the start.

A single one of the magic formations can produce enough water to fill a cup of water in the blink of an eye. If a hundred of those trigger in such a small place—though the haniwa golem's arm is pretty huge—the pressure gets crazy instantly. In order to increase its penetrating ability, I added a single ground-type magic formation that produces sand. I wanted to put in fine ruby powder at first, but the water pressure was so crazy that there's no problems with its power even with sand. Adding on to that, it managed to penetrate through 3cm of black steel in one of the experiments.

Another experiment had a stopper blast away at ludicrous speeds... Yep, this

Water Cutter is seriously powerful.

It costs around 2,000 DP for each one, the costs mainly coming from the black steel ingots and magic stones.

“However, it takes a considerably high quality magic stone (500 DP) to activate and it runs out in an instant... I don’t want to have to use it that recklessly.”

“Uwaaah... hey, wouldn’t it have been better to summon a strong monster to beat Rin into submission? We can’t because we’re sealed right now though.”

Considering the expensive research cost, that might have been better... w-well, we wouldn’t have known if it would’ve won though.

Rather, after making the two gargoyle-type iron haniwas and horse golems made of salt myself, I think it turned out pretty well this time. I wasted tons of time purging the armor from the iron horses. The salt horse golems that look so obviously like salt get their strength from their iron skeleton hidden by all of the salt cover.

Next would be the salt ceiling golem, it was their simply to harass Rin. It worked~, it super worked. Now I can get some sleep.

“... Man, all things considered, that was risky.”
“Mm.”

“I only prepared [Now then, let’s do it] and [There’s more where that came from, have as much as you want] for the golem’s voice after all...”

I was in a hurry, so that was about about all I could rush and record for the golem.

I was planning on letting them recognize it as Euma by having it speak, then beat her with the second body by using a surprise attack, but as expected of the saintess, she prevented it.

“Eh, that’s all?”
“Yeah, that’s all. Even if they broke through, they’d just reach the stairway leading to the [New Riddle Area]. I was still making it though.”

... Hmm? It’s the boss room, but I never said something like the core room being just after it right?
Man, I’m glad it worked out.

The dungeon core was put in a different room than the one I was leading them to, obviously. I had already took the opportunity to expand the warehouse area when I mended it after Rin destroyed parts of it, so Rin probably wouldn't even have recognized it.

“Umm, Goshujin-sama, how long do I chase it...?”

Meat spoke, still using the salt horse golems to chase after Rin. In a sense, her operation of precisely herding Rin around was amazing. Seriously.

“Oops. I'll be heading out to talk with Rin with a messenger golem here in a bit, so just chase it a bit more and stop when I give the signal. Ah, Rokuko. Collect that salt that's on the ground. It'll be used for Rin's training after all.”

“Understood.”

“Okay~”

Good replies.

I prepared a messenger golem and headed to the boss room that still have Rin being chased by the salt horse golems in it.

*

“Oi Rin, feel like stopping?”

[Wha—Kehma! Already, back to, normal!?!]

When I spoke to Rin with the usual messenger golem, Rin looked at me in surprise—and ran straight into a salt horse golem due to looking away, tasting the salt with its whole body.

It was probably a huge blow to Rin, who doesn't particularly need to eat with its mouth.

I collected the two haniwas when I arrived, so there's just one [Kehma] left.

[Nuwa—!? S-s-stop, Kehma! You're me, follower!]

“I'm alright stopping if Rin becomes my follower though?”

[Gunu! That's, no good!]

It's saying Kehma rather than Euma right now, so I guess we're talking with wolf speech?

Thinking about it too hard's troublesome. Either way's fine I guess?

[Shit, I didn't, want to, but, no choice... —Oh dark hole that devours creation —]

“Oi hold up, I get it! I'll stop, so cut it out with that crackling!”

Rin started chanting and black lightning started to crackle around it, so I signaled to Meat in a panic to stop the salt horses. Seeing this, Rin stopped the incantation. How should I put it... ‘dark hole that devours creation’... a black hole? That magic is a thing? Dangerous stuff.

[Hmph, if you did that, from the start, it would be, good.]

“Haah... oi, Rin. Leave the dungeon if you won't become my follower... is what I'd like to say, but I'll leave you alone if you stay in the room.”

[Mm? Self important, huh, Kehma?]

“It was my win this time after all.”

[... Well, it's alright.]

Rin looked dead tired.

“Well, I'll feed you five golems a day, so don't let intruders make it past that door, boss.”

[Un, while I'm here, I'll defend. Leave it, to me.]

“Don't bring anyone saying they'll be your follower farther in either yeah? I'll feed you salt horses if you do.”

[... Got it, alright.]

Rin nodded, appearing to really, really dislike like those salt horses. Any more than this might backfire, so it should be fine as is? It might forget if I have it agree to too many things.

Besides, Rin gives a baseline of 950 DP a day, double that because it's shut in a closed room. It's a delicious existence just by it being here. It comes with risks like just now too, though.

In truth, given its distinguished service of repelling the saintess up until earlier, I'll forgive it this time.

... I-it's not like I forgave it because I can't defeat it or anything.

“... Come to think of it, how long are you going to be staying?”

[Hmm? Right... At latest, when it's spring, I'll go. Kehma, will you come, too?]

“No. I don't want to leave.”

[That so? I think, without Kehma, I'll be troubled, for food, though.]

Can't you eat anything?

I mean, you can eat golems, so can't you just eat dirt?

Chapter 143 - The Saintess' Return Home

I thought that she might come over to talk immediately after she revived, but it wasn't like that. Instead, the saintess took a short rest first before coming over to visit me, the village chief.

"It is extremely unfortunate, but I wasn't able to resolve the issue... I would still be able to stay if my country hadn't ordered me to return, though..."

"Well, it can't be helped can it? I saw you heading into the dungeon every day, so thank you."

"I am happy to hear that... unfortunately, I don't have any more time, so I must leave here."

I'd love if you didn't come back again though honestly. But your DP income... no, considering the hassle, please don't come back.

"Well then, Euma-senpai, see you again."

"... Euma-senpai? Who's that?"

"... .. No, it was my mistake. Inside the dungeon, there was a golem that talked with a similar voice to Village Chief-sama's."

Yep, you used it just now didn't you? Your skill that sees through lies. But I'm not lying.

"Hmm, a talking golem...? I've went far in, it might be mimicking my voice?"

"Really now...? By the way, it introduced itself as Euma, one of the dungeon's bosses. It appeared to be cooperating with boss—with the demon. Do you know anything about it?"

"Unfortunately, there's nothing that I can tell you."

"... Really?"

"Yeah, really."

It's a secret, so I can't talk about it [To the Saintess]! It's the truth.

If she asked me [Are you keeping a secret?], I had planned on responding with [Well, despite how things look I am an adventurer after all], but she didn't particularly keep digging.

“... Well then, Village Chief-sama, see you again.”

“Yeah. If an opportunity comes up... Ah, would you like to take pastries with you as a souvenir? I’ve come into the possession of something called cream puff. I have five of them for a gold each, would you like them?”

And so, the saintess returned to the Holy Kingdom together with the cream puffs.

... Does she have enough for traveling expenses? It’s a secret that I’m a bit worried over that despite being her enemy.

*

“Oh! Kehma, look! We’re able to summon monsters again!”

“Yeah, same with walls, passages, and rooms.”

An hour after the saintess had left, [Treaty]’s effects quietly faded. Confirming that the armor, items, traps, and monster things all looked like they’d work in the DP catalog, I took the chance to move the dungeon core to Rokuko’s room.

I’d put it into the dungeon because the saintess was staying in the inn, but I didn’t think it was even possible to seal off the dungeon core’s functions. To be exact, I want to say that we weren’t able to use our emergency escape—castling.

“And there are some more functions in the menu. You can project your voice into the dungeon and establish sortie points!”

“Wish we could’ve gotten those a bit sooner.”

The things we can do in this dungeon are slowly increasing. It’s kind of like the feeling of getting a bonus for clearing the [Treaty] or the dungeon leveling up. At any rate, we can probably make the dungeon wider and deeper.

... If there’s something like a reward system, I wonder if we should try out doing a few more extreme things? Like adding floors all the way up to the hundredth. It’d cost 500,000 DP just by adding staircase room though.

“Rin’s still here, but I can finally get some good sleep.”

“Kehma really does love sleep.”

“Humans have three major desires, it’s their instincts. Well, I’m off to sleep. Not going to do anything but sleep. Going to sleep for around three days straight. I’ll probably eat and go to the bathroom some time midway though. I don’t think

there'll be any reasons for it, but don't wake me unless you need to."

"Yes yes, I won't! Good night, Kehma."

Seen off by Rokuko, I headed for my room in the village chief's mansion.

I then had a golem prepare a futon for me. As soon as my head hit the pillow, I fell asleep.

*

Three days later.

I finally woke up and decided to head over to Rokuko's room for the first time in a while.

Mmm, that was a great rest. I slept like a log! I woke up nicely too, maybe I'll even do some work?

Then, inside Rokuko's room, Haku-san was smiling with her whole face while petting Rokuko. She had Rokuko's head on her lap.

"Good morning, Kehma-san?"

Still with her cheerful smile, Haku-san greeted me.

Ah-yes. Good morning to you too Haku-san... umm, when did you arrive?

"I came around midday yesterday? I waited for Kehma-san to wake up before I left, yet you left me waiting, what gall."

Oooooi!? I know I said to not wake me up, but wake me up if Haku-san comes! I just kept sleeping from the backlash of being so busy recently!

Not leaving from my room except for using the restroom backfired! I only ever refilled the futon's stuffing with DP and cleaned my teeth with [Cleanup]!

And now my mind's pretty jarred.

"But Haku Ane-sama, I said that Kehma would be sleeping because he was so focused on working recently you know? He got up after three days just like he said so it's alright!"

"Aah, un, that is true, Rokuko-chan. I'll pardon the matter of having me wait since Rokuko-chan says so."

"T-thank you very much."

"And so, I want you to tell me about various things today. I haven't been able to see Rokuko-chan since I have been busy lately. Really, war is bothersome. It is

profitable, though.”

Aah, I’m seeing Haku-san as a big shot again, talking about war. Also, I heard that talk about war before, but it’s really happening...?

“The DP I earn lowers when soldiers die, looking at it from the demon king’s army’s perspective, their primary goal is to whittle down the empire’s earnings. Though they should understand that something of this degree isn’t enough to shake our foundation, it is vexing that it is occurring so close to ranking season.”

Ah, she did say something about the demon king also being a dungeon core now that I think of it.

“Umm, what’s this ‘ranking’ thing?”

“Oh my, you didn’t know? Once a year, there is an assembly of dungeon cores. The DP for each is announced in a ranking. I believe I was seventh place overall last year?”

Come to think of it, I feel like Rokuko said something like that a long time ago. Rather, seventh place? That means there’re six people above Haku-san!? Err, not people, they’re dungeon cores. [1]

“Well, sixth place was the demon king’s army’s commander-in-chief, Core No. 6. His alias is [Great Demon King]. It’s alright since he hasn’t particularly done anything himself, but small fry from his faction continually get in the way.”

“It sounds troublesome in various ways.”

“Yes. You could take over some of it if you’d like?”

I’d love to hold back from that with everything I have.

“Ah, our conversation fell a little off topic, hasn’t it? I would like to hear about the matter that just occurred. I have already more or less heard about it from my pawns, though.”

“... Haku-san’s... pawns?”

“Yes. I shouldn’t say it, but the bar’s master, Wozuma, and that adventurer with talent as a carpenter, Kusan. Are you acquainted with them?”

Wozuma and Kusan, huh...? Both of them are part of the management for this village, I mean, isn’t one of them even the village sub-chief? For even Kusan to be Haku-san’s pawn, her range is wide... no, to start with, this person stands at

the peak of the adventurer guild. The number of pawns connected to such an inhuman person definitely wouldn't be low.

"Even though I called them pawns, they are both still humans otherwise unrelated to dungeons. Don't tell them anything about DP or dungeon masters."

"Ah, yes."

"And so, according to Wozuma and Kusan's reports, the village chief appears to be doing a splendid job?"

"I'm only pressing work onto others."

"Hmmm, well if that's the case then it's fine. Wozuma was originally an official that worked in my castle, so it wouldn't be a mistake to leave domestic affairs to him."

I heard something good. Let's send all of the troublesome stuff, he's definitely some super elite if he worked in the empire's castle.

"So, I wanted to ask about various things since I haven't been able to come over due to being so busy... is that alright?"

"Y-yes. What do you want to talk about?"

"I would like to hear about that black wolf and the saintess... but first, what is this about you giving Rokuko-chan a ring?"

I instinctively prostrated on the ground.